



Sheffield TIMES



Community News for Sheffield & Ashley Falls, MA SECOND GENERATION Vol.VII, Issue 5 May/June 2008

TOWN VOTES ON ELECTED SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Voters at Sheffield's annual Town Meeting on May 5 voted to make the School Committee elected rather than appointed by the Boards of Selectmen of the five towns that make up the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. The vote, by secret ballot after much discussion, was 143 to 74.

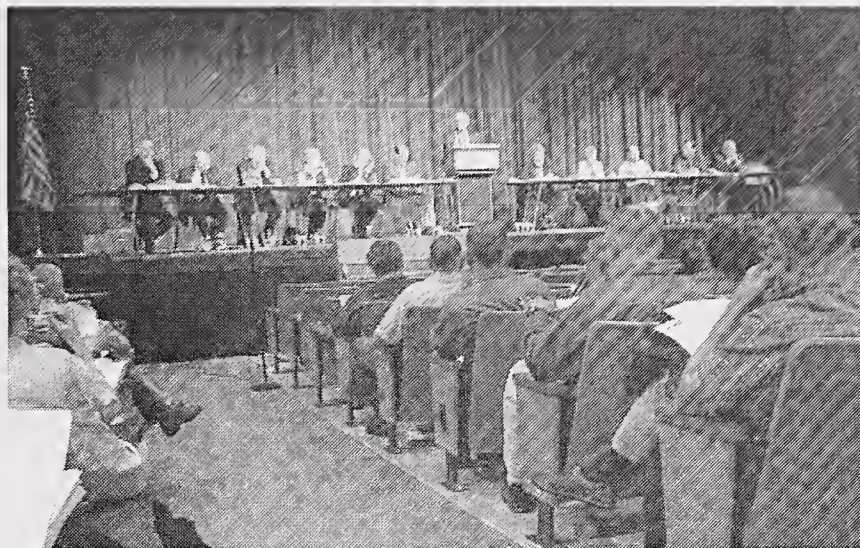
The school district is one of only two regional districts in the state that does not have an elected school committee. For the change to take place, Alford, Egremont, Monterey and New Marlborough also have to approve it. So far, Monterey and New Marlborough have also passed it, and the article is on Egremont's and Alford's warrants for their town meetings in early May.

The Sheffield meeting approved all the articles on the warrant. Voters approved Sheffield's \$2.47 million operating budget unanimously. By a vote of 145 to 72, after nearly an hour of discussion, they okayed

the \$5.08 million that is Sheffield's share of the school's operating budget. That vote is contingent on a \$100,000 override of Proposition 2½, a measure that's on the ballot for the May 12 Town elections.

Among the many specific appropriations voted on, attendees approved the purchase of a new fire truck and a new plow and mowing equipment for the Highway Dept.

Voters also approved the creation of a new Housing Commission. They voted 51 to 20 to change the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals from three regular and three associate members to five regular and one associate member.



Bruce Person moderates the 275th Sheffield Town Meeting.

The four warrant items clarifying various points in the town's zoning bylaws were also approved.

More than 200 residents attended this year's meeting, which was held at Mt. Everett High School. Many left after the school committee vote.

MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER OF THE SHEFFIELD TIMES

The *Sheffield Times*, published by the Sheffield Association, is now in its seventh year of reporting news for our town, perhaps long enough for it to seem a stalwart and institutional part of the Sheffield landscape. But like a lot of Sheffield, it depends on volunteers and the generosity of the community. Expenses have been rising and donations haven't been keeping up. The cash cushion built up in the early years has been dwindling.

A recent big expense was mailing the January/February 2008 issue to the whole town. Some 2,500 copies of that issue were printed instead of the usual 1,200 so that all in town could review

the issues ahead of time and vote with a better understanding in the special town meeting at the end of January. It continued what the *Sheffield Times* has done for every town meeting since we started publishing in 2001. Pauline Schumann, head of the Friends of the Senior Center, credits the information effort with the town passing the warrant approving matching grant money for the proposed new Senior Center.

Each regular issue of the *Times* costs around \$2,500, including direct costs such as printing and mailing and overhead costs such as insurance. Each issue carries ads at affordable rates, that bring

in around \$500 per issue. That leaves around \$2,000 per issue to come from other sources, or \$12,000 a year.

Mindful of the expenses, we've undertaken cost-cutting measures such as switching to bulk mail instead of first class. We're considering fund-raising measures such as additional appeals and looking for grants. We're looking for local businesses to underwrite each issue, as Ward's Nursery did this one. If anyone has an idea of how to help us raise money, let us know.

We look forward to serving Sheffield for many years to come. We can do it, with your help. —The Sheffield Association

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Sheffield TIMES

Community Newsletter for
Sheffield & Ashley Falls, MA

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Published by

The Sheffield Association

P.O. Box 1339

Sheffield, MA 01257

Working since 2001 to foster communication
among the people, businesses, and organizations
of Sheffield and Ashley Falls

*Photo credits: Andrea Scott, page 1; Kathy Orlando,
page 3, 4, 24; Ellen Rowntree, page 6; Cassie Uric-
chio, page 10; Berkshire School, page 11; Peter
Rowntree, page 20; Historical Society, page 22.*

TOWN HALL BURGLARIZED IN APRIL

Sheffield's Town Hall was broken into
sometime between 9pm on Thursday,
April 24, and the start of business on
Friday, April 25. Only a small amount of
cash was taken.

"They came in, went right for the
money, took it and got right out," said
Joe Kellogg, Sheffield's Town Admin-
istrator. He said there was no damage

except to the door used for the break-in,
and that damage was quickly repaired.

"We've tightened up our procedures,"
said Kellogg. "We're more conscious
about making sure doors are locked and
things are put away."

There's never much cash on hand, he
said. "We take in money and deposit it
regularly. We don't keep it around."

THANK YOU TO RECENT CONTRIBUTORS!

Norman & Elizabeth Beck

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Grace Wallace Brown

Kent S. Clow III

Bill & Dorothy DeVoti

Peter Elsbach

Emily H. Fisher

Friends of the Bushnell-Sage Library

Richard S. Novak

Adolph & Jane Pekarul

Jim & Barbara Shiminski

Nancy Smith

Harriette A. Sturges

Marion Whitman

Lois Van Cleef

If we missed anyone, we'll catch you in the next issue!

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venture? Let us know! Send suggestions and submissions to the P.O. box or e-mail
address below. News briefs can be one or two sentences, short articles between
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tion of the Calendar Editor and include a contact name and number in case there
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**July/August
issue deadline:
June 15**

WORK ON SHEFFIELD GREEN TO BE FINISHED THIS YEAR

After many years and countless delays, phase two of the improvement project on the Sheffield Village Green is getting underway. The project includes a new drainage system along the green, complete repaving of the parking area from the south side of Gulotta's service station to the south end of the Verizon building, adding historic streetlights to match those on the shop side of the green, and finally, new landscaping.

Construction is slated to begin in May and is expected to last for three months. Town Administrator Joe Kellogg recently explained that disruption should be minimal. The roadwork will be completed in stages so that only 10 parking spots will be lost daily. The only major change due to the work will be the relocation of the Farmers' Market of Sheffield for the 2008 season (see box below).

The renovation project began in the mid-1990s when a portion of federal highway funds was made available for enhancement of historic transportation sites. The federal government was to pay 75 percent of the cost and the state 25 percent. The Town of Sheffield received a grant of \$488,000 for restoration of the village green.

A major part of the plan was burying the utility lines. Unfortunately, this contributed to the long delay. The Mass Highway Dept., responsible for administering the project, was reluctant to undertake the complicated and expen-

sive process.

The costs of installing underground wiring were last estimated in 2000 and came in at an astonishing \$238,000.

The selectmen approved the project without the underground line work in 2006, and the state finally began organizing.

Petricca

Construction of Pittsfield has been selected

to supervise the project. To keep delays to a minimum, it is obtaining all materials and supplies, including 62 tons of asphalt, before setting the date to start construction. The exact start date will be announced shortly.

At the project's completion, Sheffield residents will have an enhanced and improved green, with new plantings, all dying or dead trees replaced, a full complement of the historic streetlights and an improved traffic pattern. The new drainage system may not be immediately apparent.



Before the construction: drainage components are being assembled on the Sheffield Village Green. The center of town will be disrupted until fall.

Administrator Kellogg is asking businesses to use the Town Hall parking lot for the duration. (Final work on that lot is being delayed until after the renovation work on the green; see story below.)

Kellogg is pleased that the Village Green work is occurring during his first year as town administrator. "We have been looking forward to this for a long time, and we're pleased it is going to happen. It's a case of 'short term pain for long term gain.' We're just asking people to be patient." —Nancy Kriegel

TOWN HALL PARKING PROJECT ON HOLD

The final landscaping of the Town Hall parking area will await the completion of the Village Green renovation. The planning committee decided to wait until the heavy construction in the town center was completed to avoid inadvertent damage to newly installed plantings and walkways.

The parking area project will now be completed in September and October. In the meantime, there's still a chance to order stones for the "Walk of Names" or otherwise contribute to the project. Make checks payable to Town of Sheffield Parking Area Fund and mail to the Town Treasurer, PO Box 325, Sheffield MA 01257. Contributions are tax-deductible.

—Catherine Miller

FARMERS' MARKET MOVES TO MASSINI LOT FOR 2008 SEASON

The Farmers' Market of Sheffield will operate out of a new location for the 2008 season due to the Sheffield Green construction project. This year, the market will be held at the Massini parking lot, located behind the privet hedge on the east side of Route 7 across from Miller Ave. and the Sheffield Pub.

The market will open on Fri., May 9, Mother's Day weekend, and run through the Fri., Oct. 10, Columbus Day weekend. As always, it will feature an array of local vendors and farmers, with exciting new additions. The live music program will continue throughout the season, as well as special events and children's activities.

"The Farmers' Market is one of the greatest events in Sheffield," says Dominic Palumbo, board member and owner of Moon in the Pond Farm. "It brings together diverse members of the community every Friday to enjoy the bounty of our local farms and neighbors. It enables Moon in the Pond Farm and other local farms to continue as functional entities in the town. We look forward to the community's continuing support."

The new location has ample parking for customers. New signage will be posted throughout the area. For more information, contact June Wolfe at 229-4619, or Dominic at 229-9032.

—N.K

REVEILLONS GET TOWN DANCING

The First Saturday Folk Music Series at Dewey Hall, conceived and produced by Tom Ingersoll, started its spring season with a Friday evening concert on April 4. An unprecedented number of people crowded into Dewey Hall to hear the music. People sat on the stairway and the balcony floor because all the chairs were taken.

The Reveillons, a traditional folk group from Montreal, responded to the energy from the crowd, their music reverberating in the great acoustics of the hall. The crowd learned to keep time, Canadian style, to the traditional fiddle of Richard Forest, the jaw harp of Dave Berthiaume, and the guitar of Marc Maziade. Jean-Francoise Berthiaume's step-dancing feet provided the percussion.

The Reveillons' visit continued on Saturday afternoon, when 50 people came to Dewey Hall to learn Quebec fiddle styles, concertina and jaw harp from the band members, as well as step, contra and square dances.

Saturday night people came to the Undermountain School cafeteria to dance. The opening circle dance brought everyone to their feet. Jean-Francoise's singing calls had everyone moving. Bob Law said of the evening, "It was truly a pleasure to see so many people really, really enjoying themselves."

Priscilla Cote, president of the Friendly Union and Pauline W. Schumann, president of the Friends of the Sheffield Senior Center co-chaired the weekend event, which was sponsored by the Friends of the Sheffield Senior Center, the Sheffield Friendly Union, Tom Ingersoll and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. The high school culinary class provided cookies for the events.

At the Saturday evening event, Julie Hannum, representing Sheffield's Board of Selectmen, shared the news that the town had applied for a grant from the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to build the proposed Senior Center behind the American Legion. A wonderful display created by John-Arthur Miller, director of the Senior Center, Barbara Fletcher, the assistant director, Peter Traub, president of the Council on Aging and Grace Campbell, member of the Building Committee, showed the proposed plans and activities being considered for that building.

Ben Downing, Sheffield's state senator, noted his pleasure in



Top: Couples enjoy the Reveillons at the Saturday dance. The event showed off plans for the proposed new Senior Center, below left. Below right: fiddle and clog instruction at Dewey Hall.

seeing people of all ages coming together for this event.

Marc Maziade, the leader of the Reveillons, summed up the weekend: "We are happy that all of this was such a success! The whole band had a great time with all of you guys. Thank you all for the efforts you put in getting all of us to enjoy ourselves as much! And I think you orchestrated this engagement as professionally as anyone we have encountered."

"We all had a great time at this free celebration," Pauline said. "But the next time it will be a fund raiser to help furnish the proposed new Senior Center, so be ready with your donations!"

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PINE ISLAND FARM HOPES TO TURN MANURE INTO ENERGY

When farmers use animal waste as fertilizer for fields that grow animal fodder, they maintain what is known as the fertility cycle. But when 900 confined cows each produce 133 pounds of "fertility" a day and release 35,500 cubic feet of methane into the atmosphere, you have a problem. Unless your farm is Pine Island Farm. Then you have electricity.

The largest dairy farm in Massachusetts, milking 600 cows three times a day, is right here in Sheffield and, last year, we almost lost them. "We just couldn't keep operating at a loss," says Louis Aragi, Sr., also known as Chico. "Milk was costing us \$18 per hundredweight to produce and we were making \$11 per hundred weight." In desperation, the Aragis auctioned off 750 of their young stock. "If it got any worse," says Louis Aragi, Jr., "we were going to sell everything and get out."

The economic picture looks better this year. Milk sells for \$22 per hundredweight, and the Patrick administration has implemented shortfall safeguards in Massachusetts. The security allows the Aragis to pursue a project they had been putting off—building an anaerobic manure digester.

In July 2006, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative funded a feasibility study for the \$1.3 million project. Anaerobic (meaning "without oxygen") digestion is the bacterial decomposition of organic waste. In the process, biogas is released, most of which is methane. An anaerobic digester would accelerate the decomposition process under controlled conditions and capture the methane gas. The by-products of

the process are the same by-products of a manure pit except that the liquid and solid fertilizer that comes out of a manure digester are weed-free, disease-free and almost odor-free. The methane gas is burned to generate electricity.

The feasibility study for the Pine Island digester projects that it will produce 125 kilowatts per hour, which works out to 979,700 kWh per year. Subtract the thermal energy required to run the operation, and about 3.44 billion Btu per year of energy is left over. That's the equivalent of almost 24,800 gallons of fuel every year. In addition, the excess heat from the engine produces a surplus of hot water that will be utilized in the milking parlor for sterilization.

Turning a waste disposal problem into an alternative source of fuel—does it get better than that?

Yes, according to Steve Dvorak, president of GHD, Inc., the company building the digester. In addition to the free energy and a welcome waste-disposal solution, farmers will experience what he calls "avoided costs." The solid waste (called squeezings) is so clean it can be safely used for bedding the cows instead of sand, saving thousands of dollars a year. And because the liquid fertilizer that's produced has been heated, fly eggs, pathogens and weed seeds are killed, reducing the need for herbicides and pesticides.

Pine Island Farm is in the planning process now, gathering together alternative energy grants and working on the project design. They hope to begin installation by the end of June of this year.

—June Wolfe



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PROFILE: WRAY GUNN, VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Wray Gunn, a longtime, well-known resident of Sheffield, participates in a variety of Sheffield, Great Barrington and Berkshire County organizations.

Wray has spent most of his life in the Berkshires. The youngest of three boys, he was born in Atlanta, GA, in 1930, where his father was a school principal and athletic coach. When Wray was nine, the family moved to the Berkshires so his father could take over the Van Allen Trucking Company in Lenox, which was owned by Wray's aunt. They lived in Lee for two years before moving to Stockbridge, where the Gunn family had lived and owned land since 1755. Eventually, his father returned to educational work, serving as coach or athletic director at a number of prep schools in the Berkshires.

Wray graduated from the Williams High School in Stockbridge in 1948. At school, he was a leader, serving as vice-president of his senior class, editor of the school newspaper, president of the



Wray Gunn

Student Council and president of the State Student Councils. Always active in sports, he was selected as an all-Berkshire athlete in his junior and senior years. In 1952 he graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a degree in chemistry and minors in physics and math. Following graduation, he was hired as a lab technician at Nelco Metals, a magnesium plant in Canaan, CT, that's located behind the Stop and Shop and known locally as "the old lime plant." Wray ran the chemical analysis lab from the start and was officially promoted to chief chemist in 1959, after earning a degree in spectroscopy from Boston College.

In 1962, Nelco Metals was purchased by Pfizer, Inc., and the name was changed to Specialty Minerals, Inc. With this change, Wray became manager of quality control for the plant. He retired from Pfizer in 1992 when the plant was bought by Minerals Technologies and retired from that company in 1996, continuing

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on for some years as a consultant. Since 2002 he has worked one to two days a week at Emporium Antiques Center in Great Barrington.

Wray moved to Sheffield in 1953, where he has lived in the same house on Lime Kiln Rd. for 55 years. He raised four children there with his first wife, Dolores, who died in 1993. After her death, he married Cora Portnoff. Between them they have six adult children and five grandchildren. When his children were young, he frequently volunteered as a referee for their baseball, basketball and soccer games, an interest that evolved into Wray working as a paid referee for other schools and youth groups throughout the county for 35 years.

Deep Berkshire roots

Wray's family history has contributed in part to Wray's choice of community involvements over the years. He comes from one of the freeborn landowning black families who lived in Stockbridge before the Revolutionary War. He is a fifth-generation descendent of Agrippa Hull, a freeborn black who came to Stockbridge in 1765 and served under Gen. Thaddeus Kosciuszko in the Revolutionary War. (Hull's portrait hangs in the Stockbridge library). Elizabeth Freeman ("Mum Bett") was Hull's neighbor when she moved to Stockbridge after being freed from slavery in a court case in which she was defended by Theodore Sedgwick, for whom Hull worked as a butler. Wray's grandfather was born in the original family homestead, located on East Main St., just past the Berkshire Theater Festival. There are unpublished genealogies of Gunn family members dating from the 1700s.

Since the age of 15, Wray has been an active member of the Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Great Barrington. Founded in 1870, this church has served as a religious, social and cultural center for area blacks, and it has had an important ongoing influence on his life. For many years he has been a trustee, often trustee chair. In the 1960s the local branch of the NAACP held its meetings there. (Wray is still a member of the NAACP although there is no longer an active Berkshire branch.) Construct, Inc., the community housing group of which he was one of the charter members and elected president in 1975, also used the church as an

early home. Currently, Wray works with Rachel Fletcher, founder of the Great Barrington River Walk, to organize at the church an annual lecture and birthday celebration of W.E.B. DuBois, the scholar, historian and major figure in the early civil rights movement. Wray is also working to establish a Scholarship Fund in honor of Reverend Esther Dozier, who was killed in 2007. Wray and Cora are representatives to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which in March 2008 approved the church for nomination to the National Register.

Since 2004 Wray has been a member of the African-American Heritage Advisory Council for the Upper Housatonic Valley African-American Heritage Trail, an organization sponsored by the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Williams College and Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. The project culminated in the 2006 publication of a book edited by David Levinson that is a collection of articles, essays and photos recording African-American life in the region with a trail guide to important African-American landmarks in the Berkshires and northwestern Connecticut.

In 2007, Wray became a member of the Friends of the W.E.B. DuBois Home Site, on Route 23 near the junction with Route 71. The property was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976. The Friends are working with UMass to obtain a grant to landscape the site and make it more accessible to the public.

Wray's interest in Mum Bett's connection to his family led to his involvement in the Sheffield Historical Society, where he served as vice-president from 2000 to 2003 and president from 2003 to 2006. During his presidency, the mortgage on the Stone Store was paid off with the help of a \$12,000 matching grant, the roof on the Dan Raymond house was repaired and there was a major change in office personnel. He continues as an active member of the society.

Wray also served on the Sheffield Planning Board, where from 1985 to 2003 he was vice chair and then chair for a total of four terms. He is pleased that during this time the zoning bylaws were approved as well as the cell tower on the Larkin property off Route 7 and the Glenanna Way and Bunce subdivisions. He says the experience provided "a lot of hands-on training."

In addition, Wray has been a member

of the Great Barrington Lions Club since 1970, serving as president on and off for years, including the past seven years. The club raises money to help purchase eyeglasses and hearing aids for school children whose families can't afford them and for several causes, including the Eye Research Center in Boston, the Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Laboratory at Boston University and Clarke School for the Deaf in Chicopee. Locally, the Lions recycle glasses and hearing aids to local schools, optometrists and families; there are drop-off stations at Wards Nursery, the Emporium and Dapsons.

Most recently, through Cora, he has become involved with the Olga Dunn Dance Company in Great Barrington. He obtains ads for the program bulletin and sells tickets at performances.

When asked why he is involved in such varied volunteer activities, Wray says he likes interacting with people. "It makes me feel good. I like to meet people, to talk and joke with them. It keeps my energy level up." Anyone who runs into Wray in the center of town or at one of his organizational meetings knows firsthand his infectious smile and his friendly manner.

—Ellen Rowntree

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IT'S TIME FOR FRESH AIR KIDS TO COME TO SHEFFIELD

This summer, for the fifth time, our friend Nia will pack her backpack and duffle bag in Brooklyn while we empty out the hall dresser and excavate a corner of the girls' bedroom. She'll board a bus early in the morning, and we'll tap our toes and fingers as the day goes on, and then about half an hour before we need to leave our house we'll set out, joining a group of equally excited families in a school playground parking lot. Some we know from similar waits in past years, some are new faces. We chat, and watch our children on the monkey bars with one eye while we keep the other on the road. "The bus! The bus! I see it!" someone will finally shout, and everyone presses to the curb, trying not to rush the visitors and keeping welcoming smiles switched on high.

Nia comes to us thanks to the Fresh Air Fund. The charity was founded in New York City in 1877. Since then, it has provided free summer vacations

in the country to more than 1.7 million New York City children from disadvantaged communities. Each year, thousands of children visit volunteer host families in 13 states and Canada through the Friendly Town Program or attend Fresh Air Fund camps. 20-25 Berkshire families participate each year, says local coordinator Lelia Bruun, and the door is always open to more.

Host families can choose a one- or two-week visit and can specify a wish for a boy or girl visitor of any age from 6 to 12. Our family was very clear about certain things we thought would affect the matching process—we don't have a TV, for example. While most host families have children in the same age range as the guest, several hosts do not have children of their own.

At every turn we've found the process interesting and the people we've met helpful and friendly. Lelia Bruun, of Great Barrington, and Laurene Hewins,

of Sheffield, were our first contacts. They both spoke openly about their own experiences as hosts, Laurene describing the "Fresh Air sister" she grew up with and has kept in her life ever since, as well as her family's own history hosting a child.

Families are encouraged to keep their expectations realistic, and we've found that to be the single best piece of advice on offer. We've also seen that it can be the hardest to take up. The few people we encountered who were disappointed in the program seemed to have been expecting adult houseguests. The children who come off the bus vary just as widely as one might expect children to vary: some bold, some reserved and uncertain, and some in between. But they are all children, and like our own children, we can reasonably expect they will be students, not masters, of manners and social skills. And all of them are very brave. They get on that big old bus and leap into the unknown, into a family



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they may have read a short description of or spoken to briefly on the phone, in a place they can scarcely imagine.

We've found it useful to remember that our tolerances are not the same as our visitor's, or our own children's. The creepy crawlies and night sounds and bodies of water we take in stride may come as a welcome or unwelcome change for someone new to all of them. The parts of our life our children may feel private about or protective of will be different from ours. I and my children may experience the same visitor in entirely different ways.

Our girls were four and eight when we began this adventure with Nia, who is just slightly older than our older daughter. Hazel, now 12, remembers her excitement about meeting someone new and having her stay. "The summers weren't as fun before Nia," says now eight-year-old Pearl.

The funny thing is, for the weeks that Nia is here, we do—as the Fresh Air Fund advises families to do—pretty much all the same stuff we usually do. (A dazzling round of activities and outings will exhaust everyone, and no one will be at their natural, host-ly best). It's just that we do it all with a new set of eyes among us, and that seems to make a big difference.

If you are interested in learning more about the Fresh Air Fund, call Lelia Bruun at 528-6701. —Janet Elsbach

MUSIC WORKSHOP AND CONCERT

Monterey native Peter Amidon will lead a workshop and performance of "sacred harp" music, also known as "shape note" music, on Sat., May 31, at the Monterey United Church of Christ, 478 Main Rd., across from the General Store. "Sacred harp" is type of a *cappella* singing in four-part harmony that originated in the 1700s in New England. The workshop is sponsored by the Bidwell House Museum, 528-6888, or email at Bidwell-House@gmail.com.

Says Alice Maggio, a resident of South Egremont and a sophomore at Wesleyan University, "Sacred harp singing engages your whole body in producing sound. Unrestrained by the usual choral concern for blending, sacred harp singers are free to sing their heads off. It is quite exhilarating, and it feels great to be part of a long-standing community tradition."

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS

The Sound of Music in performance

The Performing Arts Department will produce its final show of the school year, *The Sound of Music* on Fri. and Sat., May 16 and 17, at 7pm and on Sun., May 18 at 2pm.

The musical features a cast and crew of over 50 students from grades 5-8. The principal leads are Trudy Hall as Maria Rainer, Jake Smerechniak as Capt. George von Trapp, Amanda Johnston as Baroness Elsa Schraeder, Hannah Nayowith as the Mother Abbess and Will Danz as the Max Detweiler. The roles of Captain von Trapp's children are played by Bridget Payne, Ryan Smith, Mia Bills, John Payne, Katie Shannon, Kristin Wolfe, and Caroline Mack, with Jake Kerzner acting as Rolf Gruber the messenger boy turned Nazi. The roles of the Abbey's nuns are played by Nina Scibelli, Becky Olivieri, Tori Loubert, Jordan Lome, Melissa Abbott, Kelsie Sullivan, Lindsey Getchell and Caitlyn Carmody.

The Sound of Music is directed by Robert W. Law and Charles Coughlin, with Tina Pagliasotti as music director and Kristine Waterman as the choreographer. Hilda Banks Shapiro is the rehearsal/performance pianist. Student assistant directors are Samantha Riiska and Mel Barth.

Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$8 for seniors and students. To reserve tickets, call the box office at 229-8252.

School celebrates the environment

The school celebrated the environment with workshops and continued beautification of its arboretum during the week of April 14. It held its first "Green Is Beautiful Conference for the Environment," with workshops for educators throughout the Berkshires as well as for Southern Berkshire students on recycling, environmental issues and alternative energy experiments for classrooms. James P. Dunn gave the keynote address on "The Solar Revolution: Zero Energy Homes." As part of the event, the Lenox Garden Club held a judged flower show in the

Community Atrium of the school.

On April 18 area tree professionals visited the campus for the 3rd annual Arborist Day at the school's arboretum. The purpose of the day was to continue the process of rejuvenating the existing trees on the SBRSD campus. The participating professional companies were Barrett Tree Service, Webster-Ingersoll and Whalen Nursery.

'Encore!' theatre camp this summer

The school will be offering its third summer of theatre camp for all area students in grades 3-9. "Encore!" is a six-week camp that is both educational and fun. It will run from Mon., June 30 through Sun. Aug. 10.

The school district has employed an artistic team of directors, acting coaches, pianist, choreographer, and music director. Students attending will primarily work on basic acting skills, dance/movement, voice, monologues, theatre games, improvisation, and technical theatre skills. In addition students will be rehearsing daily for the finale event, on the weekend of Aug. 8 of "Annie Jr." For information, call Bob Law at the Southern Berkshire Performing Arts Department Office, 229-8252, or email blaw@tek2000.net.

BOARDMAN HONORED

Freshman Sheri Boardman, daughter of Rick and Sandy Boardman of Sheffield, was named the Fighting Tiger Athlete-of-the-Week by the SUNY Cobleskill Athletic Dept in early April. Sheri is a rookie pitcher for the college's women's softball team. She recorded a pair of shut-out victories over Columbia-Greene Community College in Hudson, NY, with a four-hitter in the first game and a two-hitter in the nightcap.

"Sandy and I are very proud of this," said Rick.



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RELIGIOUS SERVICES

ASHLEY FALLS

Greenwoods Community Church (non-denominational), 355 Clayton Rd. 229-8560; parsonage (860) 824-7442. Sunday: 9:30am Sunday School (ages 3-adult); 10:30am Worship Service, nursery care provided. Rev. Edward M. Eastman Jr., Pastor

Trinity Methodist (United Methodist), 1156 Ashley Falls Rd. 229-2712. Sunday: 9am Service. Betty LeGeyt, Pastor

GREAT BARRINGTON

Congregation Ahavath Shalom (reconstructionist), North St. 528-4197. Friday, 8pm & Saturday, 10am. Services are not held every week. Schedules are updated weekly on the answering machine, including special services

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Rd. 528-6378. Friday: 7:30pm Shabbat Service. Saturday: 10am Shabbat service & Torah study. Rabbi Deborah Zecher, Assistant Rabbi Andrew Klein

Unitarian Universalist Meeting of S. Berkshire. Meets at the United Methodist Church, 198 Main St. 528-4850; home 528-3106. Sunday: 5pm service. Rev. Kathy Duhon

SHEFFIELD

Christ Church Episcopal & Trinity Lutheran, 180 Main St. 229-8811. Sunday: 8am & 10am Holy Eucharist; 10am Sunday School & child care; Thursday: 10am Holy Eucharist & Healing. Rev. Anne Ryder

Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, Route 7 & Kellogg Rd. 229-8649. The public is welcome.

Faith Baptist, 640 North Main St. 229-0400. Sunday: 9:45am Sunday School; 10:45am Worship Service; 6pm Evening Service; Wednesday: 7pm Bible Study. Barton Keller, Pastor

Old Parish (Congregational), 125 Main St. 229-8173. Sunday: 10am Worship, Sunday School, 10am. Rev. Jill Graham, Pastor

Our Lady of the Valley (Catholic), Maple Ave. 229-3028. Saturday: 4:00pm Mass; Sunday: Sheffield 7:30am, 9am Masses; Mill River 10:30 Mass. Rev. John S. Lis

Sheffield Chapel (non-denominational), 1970 N. Main St. 528-2911, www.sheffieldchapel.org. Sunday: 10:45am Morning Worship, 9:30am Sunday School for all ages. Wednesdays: Group Prayer Time 7pm. Pastor: George Karl

HIGH SCHOOL AGRICULTURE

Mount Everett High School's new agriculture classes, offered for the first time this year to sophomores, juniors and seniors, were a huge success. The 25 students involved have become a part of the FFA, making Mount Everett the 17th chapter for the FFA in Massachusetts.

Science teacher Cassie Uricchio is head of the program. She plans and organizes everything with her students. Junior Andrew Cross and senior Chelsea Torrico have already developed a working farm on campus. So far, it consists of two dairy goats and a few Indian Runner ducks.

Chelsea says, "The goats will provide curriculum for the school for all grades, Pre-K through 12." Not only will the goats be used for anatomy studies in the agriculture classes, their milk can be used in various recipes and to make cheese, supporting the school's culinary program.

The ducks are all males. Not being able to produce eggs, they will not benefit the culinary class. Andrew says, "The ducks will be perfect for behavior studies and will be fun for the young kids to play with."

Students are constantly at work improving the agriculture program. Many animals are being cared for within the school building, such as two guinea pigs, two rabbits, and several fish. The aquaculture lab is starting up again. Students plan

to raise fish and sell them to stock ponds, bringing the money that is made back into the program.

Students are also very interested in redoing the school's greenhouse and renewing its arboretum. Achieving this will bring them closer to their future plan of a beautiful garden for the school.

Uricchio and her "aggies" have high hopes for next year. The program in 2008/09 will involve the school's environmental class as well. The students hope to widen the class choices to include aquaculture, botany and the arboretum. Internships are also being considered by some students. Cross and Torrico are currently taking an independent study involving the school's farm.

Agriculture is a broad subject, so the new FFA members need all the help they can get. Anyone interested in joining the FFA, making donations to the agriculture program or looking for more information can contact Cassie Uricchio at curicchi@tek2000.net. New classes are always being considered, so suggestions are welcome.

—Alex Jamieson
Mt. Everett junior



Ducks at the school's farm

AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Mount Everett High School will be hosting an agricultural fair on its grounds on Wed., June 11 (rain date: June 12), 10am-2pm. Come learn how your food and clothing gets from the farm to your table! Local farmers and agricultural businesses will showcase animals, farm machinery, crops and more at this educational event. Bring the family and enjoy some fun agricultural activities, including a petting zoo, seed-planting and face-painting.

For more information, contact Cassie Uricchio at 229-8734 x 135 or curicchi@tek2000.net.



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BERKSHIRE SCHOOL MAKES CENTENNIAL GIFT TO SHEFFIELD

At a recent meeting of the Sheffield Board of Selectmen, Berkshire School presented the town with a significant gift in honor of the school's Centennial year. In addition, Berkshire also gave the Sheffield Fire Dept. an additional Centennial gift in gratitude for its services to the school.

"As Berkshire celebrates its 100th anniversary, we also celebrate our relationship with the town that our students and faculty call home," Head of School Michael J. Maher said after the meeting. "Berkshire is committed to continuing to be a vital part of the community."

In late April, Berkshire held a Centennial Parents' Weekend that was attended by more than a thousand students and parents. The school's Centennial Alumni Weekend over May 16-17 is expected to draw even more visitors to the area.

The Berkshire officials and the Board also discussed more ways in which the school and the town, especially Mt. Everett Regional High School, can support one another. The high school currently uses Berkshire's cross-country course in the fall and its hockey rink in the winter, and recently Berkshire's varsity baseball team held a game on the Eagles' field. Student deejays from Mt. Everett host a weekly show on Berkshire's FM radio station. Also, Berkshire students act as tutors and mentors in the "Kids 4 Kids" program between Berkshire and Undermountain Elementary School, which is attended by several children of Berkshire teachers.

At the meeting, Town Administrator Joseph Kellogg suggested that the funds from Berkshire's Centennial gift be used for a one-time expense rather than be part of the operating budget.

Tom and Susan Young honored in April

Tom and Susan Young of Sheffield were honored at Berkshire School on April 12 as almost 100 alumni and friends returned to campus for the dedications of the Susan B. Young Mezzanine in Geier Library and the Thomas H. Young Field. The couple was at Berkshire from 1968 to 1995, she as assistant librarian and then library director, he as history teacher, baseball coach, and dean of students.



Top: Susan and Tom Young with Berkshire Head of School Mike Maher, center. Above: Sheffield Library Director Nancy Hahn with Eagle gardening columnist Ron Kujawski and his wife, Pat. Left: Berkshire graduate Mo Cassarra, school archivist Twiggs Myers and former Sheffield Town Manager Bob Weitz. Below: Students after a day of work at Bartholomew's Cobble.

Students volunteer in Sheffield

On April 11, Berkshire students and faculty celebrated the school's fourth annual Gracious Living Day. Sheffield organizations for which groups volunteered include the Adopt-a-Highway segment on Route 41, Bartholomew's Cobble, Bow Meow Regency kennel, Bushnell-Sage Library, The Nature Conservancy, the Sheffield Land Trust, Moon on the Pond Farm, Undermountain Elementary School, Undermountain Child Care, the Sheffield Senior Center and the Sheffield Fire Dept.



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ASHLEY FALLS: EARLIEST IN THE BERKSHIRES

Post office opens at 7am

Many of us were sorry to see the old brass post office boxes disappear from the Ashley Falls Post Office, replaced by the utilitarian metal boxes that need to be opened with a key. There is, however, a positive side to the change. Patrons can now access their mailboxes from 7am to 8pm seven days a week. The window is open from 7:30 to 11:30am and from 1 to 4:30pm. Ashley Falls has the distinction of having the earliest-opening post office window in Berkshire County.

Memorial Day Parade starts at 8am

The other Ashley Falls "earliest" is our Memorial Day Parade. It will start promptly at 8am on Mon., May 26, under the blinking red light in the center of town. Led by bagpiper Eric Goodchild, the parade proceeds up East Main St. and makes a right onto School St., ending at the Ashley Fall cemetery. The parade includes town dignitaries, veterans, scouts, the 4H club, the volunteer Fire Dept., kids on decorated bikes and sometimes a few surprises. There is a short program with music and readings, which

SHEFFIELD PARADE

The town of Sheffield's Memorial Day parade will take place on Mon., May 26, at 11am. As has been customary, the parade will gather near the Police Dept. at the junction of Berkshire School Rd. and Route 7. It will end at Barnard Park, at the corner of Miller Ave. and Route 7.

is followed by coffee and donuts back at the parish house of the Trinity Methodist Church on Route 7A.

—Pamela Bloodworth

HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES SHEFFIELD'S 275TH ANNIVERSARY

To celebrate the 275th anniversary of the founding of Sheffield, the oldest town in Berkshire County, the Historical Society will host a festival on the Society grounds on Sat., June 21 from 1-4pm. All citizens of Sheffield and its environs are invited to participate. People are encouraged to dress in colonial attire.

MORE CELEBRATIONS OF SHEFFIELD'S 275TH

In addition to the Sheffield Historical Society's celebration on June 21, there will be other celebrations of Sheffield's 275th anniversary, including as part of Sheffield in Celebration 2008 and the Sheffield Fair on Sept. 6 at the Town Park.

Do you have photos, stories, or memorabilia to share? The Town and the Sheffield Historical Society are looking for your input and ideas.

For more information or to contribute, contact any of Sheffield's selectmen or the Historical Society, the Historical Commission or the co-chairs of Sheffield in Celebration, Dave Smith, Sr., and Kathy Orlando.

All seven of the

Society's buildings will be open to the public. Tours of the 1774 Dan Raymond House Museum will be offered, and visitors can check out the Carriage Barn, where the Society's historic tool collection is on display. Meet characters from the town's past, including Parker J. Hall, Esq., in the 1820 Law Office building, along with a Revolutionary loyalist couple and local portrait photographer Carrie Smith Lorraine.

Food of the times—fresh smoked meats, fish and cheese—will be available at the Society Smokehouse. Craft and fiber arts demonstrations—in quilting, spinning and weaving,

rug braiding and rug hooking, wool shearing, and other daily activities of colonial life—will be led by local artisans. Children can take part in games such as hoops, races and silhouette making. The Bottom of the Bucket band will provide live music.

Also open to view will be "Red, White & Blue," an exhibit of American folk art at the Society's Old Stone Store and Gallery. (See page 22 for more.)

The event is open to the public and admission is free. Donations will be accepted. In the event of inclement weather, the rain date is Sun., June 22, 1-4 pm. The Sheffield Historical Society is located at 159 Main St., north of the Mobil station on Route 7.

CENTURY ACQUISITIONS TO RESUBMIT PLANS

According to the April 28 edition of the *Berkshire Eagle*, Century Acquisitions, the cement and gravel company based in Watervliet, NY, plans to resubmit plans for the project to build a hot-mix asphalt plant at its Clayton Rd. facility. The Sheffield Zoning Board of Appeals has not yet received a new application for special permit hearing.

The proposed plant would include a new 75-by-75-foot concrete pad and a 65-foot silo and be able to produce up to 300 tons of blacktop an hour. Under Sheffield's current zoning bylaws, asphalt plants are not allowed anywhere in Sheffield.

The company's first application to the ZBA was withdrawn "without prejudice" following procedural problems and a large public outcry.

Greg Marlowe, spokesperson for the company, did not return the *Sheffield Times's* calls by the time we went to press.

The company has already reapplied for a building permit, which was denied again because the proposed use is not allowed.

Many residents in Massachusetts and Connecticut are opposed to the plant. Fundraising has started to pay a land-use attorney to defend the interests of those opposed. They contend it will have profound, permanent and negative impacts on Sheffield's character and residents' property values and quality of life. Rene Wood and Catherine Miller have set up the No Asphalt! Defense Fund, P.O. Box 1177, Sheffield, MA 01257.

The *Sheffield Times* depends on the community it serves to survive. See page 2 for how you can contribute.

Library News

RECOMMENDED READING

When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace by Le Ly Hayslip with Jay Wurts (Penguin, 1990).

Remember the Vietnam War? Perhaps most of us would rather ignore what was a defeat for the U.S. But there is much to be learned from it, and it is useful to revisit the experience every once in a while, if only so we don't forget what we learned, as we did before the invasion of Iraq.

This remarkable autobiography tells part of the story. Le Ly provides a peasant's-eye view of the war that started several years after the harsh French colonial regime was thrown out by the Vietnamese under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh in 1954 and ended in 1975 when we too were ousted, along with our unpopular, inept and corrupt ally, the Republic of Vietnam.

This is not a dry military history but the intensely personal story of a strong-minded woman and her family struggling to stay together and survive.

Le Ly was the youngest daughter of a poor rice-farming family that lived in an impoverished village near Danang in northern South Vietnam. She was recruited at age 13 by the Viet Cong, the South Vietnamese insurgents fighting with the financial and military support of North Vietnam. She served as a runner, spy and informer for about three years, during which she was twice arrested and tortured by the South Vietnamese police and then falsely accused by one of her Viet Cong superiors of being a traitor

and double agent. She was forced to flee her village to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). After many hair-raising adventures and affairs—including one with her first love, the father of her first son—she met and married an

American contractor who, after fathering her second son, spirited her off to America in 1970.

The book ends in 1986 when Le Ly, by then an American citizen and restaurateur living in San Diego and the mother of three sons, returned to Vietnam—risking detention or imprisonment by the victorious Viet Cong/North Vietnamese—to find out what had happened to her family, relatives and first love. Some of the most interesting parts of the book describe Le Ly's conversations with soldiers, government officials and ordinary folk in which they relate their involvement in the war and their feelings about the victors and the vanquished and what had happened since 1975.

Having just returned from a trip to

Vietnam, I am delighted to report that the country and its courteous, curious and cheerful people are thriving and hard at work learning English and how to be free-market capitalists. While the country

still has a nominally communist government, the Vietnamese are now unified, independent and freer than they have ever been in recent history—and proud of it. While still poor, the country is attracting foreign investment and developing at a rapid pace. A few decades ago, the literacy rate was 10 percent; it is now 90 percent. After suffering a devastating famine in the 1980s caused by the government's insistence on following Marxist economic doctrine, it is now the second biggest

rice exporter in the world. The cities are in the midst of a building boom. Millions of motorbikes and motor scooters, many with two parents and two or three kids or an occasional irate water buffalo on board, clog the roads and sidewalks. One-way streets, red lights and traffic laws in general are said to be "advisory only."

The Vietnamese seem to have forgiven us for the 16 years of war that devastated the country and resulted in over four million Vietnamese dead and wounded—about 10 percent of the population. Why don't the Vietnamese hold a grudge against us for our indiscriminate use of Agent Orange, napalm, phosphorus and carpet bombing, which killed or maimed many innocent civilians? Why did we lose the war? A good way to start to understand the answers to these and other questions is to read this exciting book. —Peter Rowntree

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CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Book sale. The Library's Children's Program Coordinator, Jessica Roseman, is pleased to announce that the first annual Children's Book Sale will take place on Sat., June 28, from 11am to 2pm. It will be outside, weather permitting. Books will be priced as low as 25 cents.

Summer reading program.

This year's program will run Mon. to Fri., July 14 through July 18, from 9:30am to noon. Pre-registration is recommended. Check with the Library for the exact times for the separate sessions for different age groups.

Chess club. She has started a children's chess club (with instruction for newcomers to the game) that takes place every Thursday from 3pm to 5pm.

Jessica, who lives in Ashley Falls, started working at the library in October. Before that, she ran the summer reading program as a volunteer.



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TWO BOOK TALKS AT THE LIBRARY IN MAY

Book talk. Writer/historian/poet/publisher David J. McLaughlin will discuss and autograph his spiffy little fold-out picture book, *The Unfolding History of the Berkshires* at the Library on Fri., May 16, at 6:30pm. Almost like a children's pop-up book, McLaughlin's work takes the reader on a brisk trot through our county's past. The illustrations, photos and maps are bold and colorful, making for an engaging visual representation of our beloved Berkshires.

This event is a joint production of the Sheffield Historical Society, the Bookloft and the Library.

Book talk. Psychologist and best-selling author Carol Gilligan will read from her new novel *Kyra* on Sat., May 10, at 2pm. Gilligan, a Harvard faculty member and tenured professor for 34 years, is best known for her landmark study *In a Different Voice*, which broke new ground in

how we think about gender, psychology and moral behavior.

Kyra is her first novel. It is a haunting and unforgettable tale set in 20th-century Europe. The ties to the separate pasts of an architect and an operatic musical director loosen after they fall in love. When one decides to leave the relationship, everything they held to be true is called into question. It is a story of passion, romance, betrayal, loss, wounded souls—and therapy sessions. Says *Publishers Weekly*: "The novel's great strength is Kyra's voice, which Gilligan renders with assurance and lyricism. The result is a powerful portrait of a complex character."

The book will be on sale and the author will autograph copies after the reading and discussion.

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BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

Sheffield residents can take up to one pickup-truck load of furniture, rugs, small pieces left over from a do-it-yourself project and other bulky waste to the Transfer Station Fri., May 16, 2 to 4pm, Sat., May 17, 8am to 4pm, and Sun., May 18, 8am to noon. A coupon is required (one per household); get coupons at the Sheffield Tax Collector's office, or by mail by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope, including your license plate number, to the Treasurer/Collector's Office, P.O. Box 367, Sheffield, MA 01257.

Not accepted: tires, cathode ray tubes (TVs, computer monitors), wood, demolition debris, propane tanks, car batteries, recyclable metals, toxic materials (pesticides, chemicals, oil, etc.) and items that can fit in the trash compactor. No refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners or dehumidifiers; other "white goods" and recyclable metals can be put in the metals container next to compactor. For more information, contact David Steindler at 229-2628 or Town Hall at 229-2335.

The Sheffield Historical Society



COLLECTING, PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING
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The 1774 **Dan Raymond House Museum** offers tours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Saturday, 11 am to 4 pm (May-Oct.)

Come explore the daily lives of common people from the Revolutionary generation onward, including the intriguing history of the Sheffield Tory for whom the house is named.

The **Mark Dewey Research Center** houses the town's early archives, including tax & real estate records, historic photographs, and genealogical research. Open year round, Monday & Friday 1:30-4 pm and by appointment.

Email: mdrc@sheffieldhistory.org

The 1834 **Old Stone Store** located on the town green functions as the Society's gift shop and exhibition space.

Open weekends, Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm
& Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm (April-Dec.)

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PLANNING BOARD NEWS

The Planning Board was busy between the end of February and the April 9 meeting. The board also found itself preparing for the departure of its fearless leader, Rene Wood, as her final term will end on May 8.

At a special business meeting Feb. 27, the board continued deliberation on the major commercial development special permit application from Berkshire Fence. No determination was reached on that application because more information was needed.

At that meeting, the board decided to approve the special permit application by Sprint-Nextel Corp. to modify the existing cell tower located on the Larkin property on Sheffield-Egremont Rd. The board determined the modification would have no ill effects on the land or the community of Sheffield and would increase the service and coverage for Nextel subscribers. The conditions attached to the approval concerned the testing and monitoring program agreed to by the previous tower owner, Tower Ventures, and Nextel. The tower is now owned by Lighttower Wireless LLC.

On its regular meeting on Feb. 28, the board granted Berkshire Fence's special permit by a vote of 5-0, with several conditions. The conditions include a requirement to turn off display lights at dusk, install lights approved by Dark Sky International and specifications for maintenance. The full text is available in the Planning Board meeting minutes posted on the Sheffield town web site (sheffieldma.gov) or in the Town Clerk's office.

The board also approved the special permit by Berkshire Fence for a commercial kennel by a vote of 4 to 1, with conditions. (Berkshire Fence rents space to Hayes Happydog Daycare & Training, with room for 15 dogs.) The majority of the board felt the owner would police any excessive barking and imposed a condition to that effect. Another condition prohibits overnight boarding of dogs.

The board also approved the special permit for Berkshire

Fence to put up a greater number of and greater size of signs, provided several conditions are met. The conditions limit the size of the signs and limit the number of signs to one primary and three secondary signs.

Berkshire Fence's four applications took a good deal of time to assess and decide, and the board deserves a hand for its fortitude on this one.

During its regular business meeting on March 13, the board worked on proposed changes to the zoning by-laws for the May 5 town meeting and reviewed a draft of an updated special permit application form.

At the March 19 regular business meeting, a potential new board member was discussed. Also, wording on proposed changes to zoning by-laws were finalized. On April 3, the board opened a public hearing for proposed zoning by-law changes for warrant for the May 5 town meeting. The changes were approved 5-0.

On April 9 the board accepted a special application from Peter and Melissa Zdiarski represented by attorney Susan Smith to re-locate their pool service business to 212 Alum Hill Rd. under the by-laws regarding commercial use in a rural district. The public hearing was scheduled for May 22 at 8pm.

The board also accepted a special permit application from Alan and Linda Rosen for a larger sign under zoning by-law 6.2.5.2. A public hearing was scheduled for May 8 at 8pm.

We are losing a fine, consummate member of the board, Rene Wood. She has been a true leader, teacher and friend. She has made the board dynamic and upheld our Sheffield zoning by-laws with great passion. She ends a six-year term with at least four years as chair, with many board accomplishments, too many to recount. She has truly shown us the ropes as board members. Thanks, Rene, for your kindness and devotion to the residents of the Town of Sheffield and Ashley Falls.

—Chris Tomich, Vice Chair

RUTH GILLETTE RETIRING FROM ASSESSORS' OFFICE

On May 30, after 28 years, Ruth Gillette is retiring from the Sheffield Assessors' Office. She served as chair of the office for 11 years, giving up those responsibilities in 2005 when she turned 80. She has also served as president of the Berkshire County Assessors Association and has been a member of the International Association for Assessing Officers for more than 20 years.

In 2002 Ruth received the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers' annual Wilson Award, which was given to her as "the assessor who has made the most outstanding contributions to the assessing profession and

whose dedication to the field of assessing and to the community and state she represents has earned her this award."

Ruth has seen many changes in the Assessors' Office over the years. Some of the changes were due to technical innovations such as the computer, some came from increased state require-

ments. Ruth says she will miss the people who work at Town Hall and hopes to help out in the assessors' office from time to time, if she is needed.

Tammy Blackwell, the current chair of the Assessors, says, "Ruth is truly a lady of grace and dignity. She has been my mentor in the assessing profession for 18 years. She has been and continues to be an asset to the town, and we will all miss her knowledge, professionalism and witty character."

Ruth has lived in Sheffield since moving from North Egremont in 1947. She has two children, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

—Ellen Rowntree

ASSESSORS'/COLLECTOR

Tax bills due. The town tax collector would like to remind everyone that town tax quarterly payments were due on May 1.

Board of Selectmen's meetings can be seen on CTSB Cable Channel 16. Check schedule for times. Not all meetings are televised.

FROM THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES

2/4—A second public hearing was opened for a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for construction of a new Senior Center. Elton Ogden from Berkshire Housing Development Services, the firm preparing the grant application, was present. Town's voters approved the local share of \$450,000 at a special town meeting on Jan. 22.

The Board agreed to submit an application to the Massachusetts Division of Energy and Resources for a program offering energy audits to identify potential cost savings. The application has been prepared for Town Hall, the Police Dept. and the Library. Applicants will be notified if they have been accepted in the summer.

Amanda Dennison and Brandon Higley were given permission to hold their wedding at the Covered Bridge on June 21 at 3pm. No food or decorations will be allowed.

Shirley Snyder of 627 Hewins St. was granted a solid-waste user fee abatement in the amount of \$83 because she takes her trash to another location.

The Board accepted a proposal from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Assoc. for a two-year renewal, saving 5 percent per year in property and liability and workers' compensation insurance.

The town's cable license will expire in April 2009. Town Administrator Joe Kellogg, Selectman David Macy, Paul O'Brien and George Oleen will be on the negotiation committee for the new license. One more member will be sought for the committee.

The Board voted to approve the contract for a new telephone system for Town Hall and the Police Dept. [See story on page 19.]

Chairman Julie Hannum attended the annual Massachusetts Municipal Assoc. Conference and received an award for the Town's 25 years with MMA.

Administrator Kellogg noted that 740 broadband surveys were returned and thanked all the residents that took the time to fill them out.

2/8—The Board reviewed and discussed the FY 2009 budget. Administrator Kellogg added a column to show what each

department head requested and another to show what he is recommending. The overall budget is up 4.5 percent.

The current town mowing contract expires in March. Administrator Kellogg recommended purchasing a mower and trailer and letting the Highway Dept. take over mowing. The Board agreed to make the purchase of mowing equipment an article for the Town Meeting warrant.

Discussion ensued regarding a complaint made by Mark Pruhenski regarding junk on the property of Pete's Sales and Service on Rt. 7. Peter Batacchi will be asked to attend a board meeting to discuss the complaint.

Ruth Gillette has submitted her letter of retirement as assessor effective May 30. [See story on page 15.]

Administrator Kellogg will discuss the pay-as-you-throw options for trash disposal with Arlene Miller from the state Dept. of Environmental Protection and will provide the Board with information on this program.

The Board authorized Kellogg to sign up for the thermostat recycling program, which will provide a box at the transfer station for used thermostats. When full, the box is mailed at no cost to the Town and another box sent. The program is operated through DEP.

A letter to the New Marlborough Board of Selectmen regarding the school district mediation was signed and hand delivered by Administrator Kellogg.

2/19—The Board approved an increase from \$33 to \$55 for inspections of gas tank installations, gas piping and gas-fired appliances.

Bill Connell and Kathy Orlando were present to discuss the donation of land near the Covered Bridge by the Weinstein family to the town. The transfer became official on Feb. 8, 2008. Discussion followed regarding the Housatonic River Project, the canoe launches at the Covered Bridge and Kellogg Rd. and setting up a citizens committee for beautification of the Covered Bridge Park. It was the consensus of the Board to approve the plans and move forward with the improvements for the area.

The Mass Highway Dept. opened bids

for finishing the Village Green Project in December. Petricca Construction was low bidder, which came in under the estimated budget. The work is scheduled to take place in the spring and summer and is expected to last six months. The Board agreed that the town will sign an agreement with Mass Highway stating that any costs above 10 percent over the bid amount would be the responsibility of the Town. The Town will be involved with any changes in the scope of the work. [See story on page 3.]

The Board voted to accept the new IRS rate for business mileage reimbursement rate, 50.5 cents per mile.

The Board approved a request from Jeff Waingrow, Conservation Commission chairman, for a \$2,500 transfer from the Reserve Fund to hire a consultant to the Commission. This is a transitional period for the Commission due to three resignations and the resignation of their secretary. At the Commission's request, the Board approved the appointment of Joanne Conti as secretary at the rate of \$20 per hour. [See story on page 19.]

The Board agreed to set a deadline for submission of articles for inclusion on the annual Town Meeting Warrant of Mar. 31.

The Board agreed to appoint Vonda Alden as part-time data entry clerk for the Police Dept., at a salary of \$13 per hour.

It was noted that the sand behind Town Hall is for town residents' use.

A check in the amount of \$5,446.71 was received from the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility for six months' worth of recycling. Residents are doing a great job recycling.

Administrator Kellogg discussed meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency to discuss corrective actions for the Housatonic River on Mar. 3 or Mar. 17.

The Board agreed to allow Berkshire Health Systems to park their mobile van in the Town Hall parking lot to assist residents to sign up for health insurance and screening services.

2/21—Peter Batacchi was present to discuss the complaint regarding his

property. Photographs of the property were reviewed. Discussion ensued on possible solutions to the complaint. Batacchi indicated that the propane tanks have been removed and as soon as the weather improves he will be able to remove some of the other items. He said he would comply with the Board's requests. Discussion ensued on moving some items on the property so they would not be visible from the neighboring property.

Selectman Macy said he would like to have the Zoning Board of Appeals meet with the Selectmen to discuss having the ZBA seek advice on procedure and process for applications. This advice would have nothing to do with the decision-making process, only procedures. Discussion ensued on training for boards and commissions.

The Board agreed to use Notice of Intent fees from the Wetlands Fund to fund the position of the Conservation Commission Consultant.

3/3—Susan Svirsky, project manager for the EPA, was present to discuss corrective measures for General Electric's pollution of the Housatonic River with PCBs. A fact sheet was distributed explaining the corrective measures that could be taken. Discussion ensued regarding the history of the river contamination and impacts to the river and surrounding areas. Contamination south of the Rising Dam is minimal, so there are no plans to do any cleanup work in Sheffield, but monitoring will continue. Contact information will be provided to Svirsky so that the town can stay informed on the corrective measures.

The Board approved an application for a curb cut at 992 Foley Rd. The Highway Superintendent and Police Chief had already approved it.

The Board approved Sheffield's continuation in the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program.

The Board accepted the resignation of Maryellen O'Brien as Conservation Commission secretary, effective Jan. 31, and the resignation of Police Officer Jonathan Finnerty, effective Mar. 5. The Board appointed Ryan Kresiak as a Police Dept. Officer effective Mar. 6.

Chairman Hannum read a letter from William Kistler of Sheffield Plastics expressing interest in having a representative from this company appointed to the Economic Development Task Force. The appointment will be made at the next meeting. Administrator Kellogg will contact Kistler to invite him to the weekly meetings.

Chairman Hannum noted that the Highway Dept. has been working hard to keep up with the weather. Several mailboxes have been knocked down and the Town is working to rectify this.

Selectman Jim Collingwood discussed issues with the compactor boxes at the transfer station. Administrator Kellogg is working on prices for new boxes as well as prices for repairs.

Chairman Hannum discussed a roadside trash cleanup. Administrator Kellogg will contact the Kiwanis to discuss coordinating with their cleanup efforts.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency is offering free sand bags to communities. The Highway Dept. is sending a truck to pick up a pallet of the bags.

Vito Valentini expressed concern that one member of the School Committee is not present for the budget meetings. Chairman Hannum and Administrator Kellogg noted that Susan Young is receiving information on the budget process. Dennis Sears expressed concern about Selectmen being appointed to serve on boards and committees. Administrator Kellogg stated that there would be a warrant article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to authorize such appointments. *[See story on page 1.]*

The Board approved the 2008-2011

AFSCME contract with Highway Department employees as recommended by the Town Administrator and approved by the union.

3/17—Pauline Schumann was present representing the Friends of the Senior Center. She provided information on a music and dance program being held on Apr. 4 and 5.

The Board approved a Common Victualler License to The Marketplace of the Berkshires for their location at 18 Elm Court. *[See story on page 21.]*

The Board agreed to pay Fire Chief Rick Boardman an annual stipend of \$2,400. Sheffield is the only town in the area that had not paid such a stipend.

The Board of Selectmen received a letter from Jeff Wulfson of the Dept. of Education regarding the FY09 school budget, which was not certified by the School Committee. Wulfson will accept comments from the district, towns and School Committee before recommending a budget for FY09. Discussion ensued regarding the budget the School Committee's Finance Subcommittee recommended, which put Sheffield over the levy limit by \$17,000. A new budget has been presented that has an additional \$100,000, which puts Sheffield over the levy limit by \$75,000. The Board agreed to support the original budget submitted by the Finance Subcommittee.

Administrator Kellogg noted that the budget recommended by the state will use the statutory assessment method and would need to be approved by 4 of the 5 towns in the district. Sheffield will also need to place an override question on the

ballot, and if it fails town services would have to be cut. The Board of Selectmen is committed to looking for a long-term solution to the school issue. A letter will be sent to Wulfson reflecting the vote to support the original budget.

The Board granted permission to Todd Clay to bow hunt only at the Town Park and to hunt with no restrictions at the Town Forest.

The Board agreed to

SELECTMEN, PLANNING BOARD & MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

3/17—The Housing Subcommittee has completed its charge. An article will be on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to form a Housing Commission. The Open Space and Recreation Subcommittee will have a draft action plan for review by the end of June.

David Smith, also a member of the Agricultural Commission, gave an update on the Commission. Discussion ensued regarding the right to farm by-law.

Discussion ensued regarding the next focus for the Master Plan's committee. Several topics were discussed, including the land at the Covered Bridge, bicycle trails and Community Preservation Act. The group decided to form a committee to explore the Community Preservation Act. Discussion ensued regarding the number of members to serve on the CPA.

The groups also discussed the length of terms for members of the Implementation Advisory Committee.

Continued on page 18

grant a full solid-waste user fee abatement to the property at 1375 North Main St., which was billed in error.

Chairman Hannum read an email from Sheffield, England, about forming a relationship between the two Sheffield communities. Peter Rowntree volunteered to work on this project. The Board agreed to have Peter Rowntree contact John Errington in England to discuss it. Administrator Kellogg said he would like to work with Rowntree on this project.

The Board agreed to appoint Dennis Duff and William Kistler of Sheffield Plastics to the Economic Development Task Force.

Administrator Kellogg gave an update on the Village Green Improvement Project. The construction will begin in April and is anticipated to end in September. Petricca Construction will do the work. A meeting will be set up between Petricca Construction, the town and local businesses to discuss the project. Police Chief Jim McGarry has been working with the company to develop a traffic pattern during the construction. Discussion ensued regarding alternative locations for the Farmers' Market of Sheffield. *[The start of the project has been delayed; see page 3.]*

Selectman Collingwood brought up the transfer station's paper compactor box that was damaged, apparently beyond repair. [Buying a new box was on the warrant for the town meeting.]

Chairman Hannum noted that the annual appointment process would begin soon for the town appointments that expire in June.

Town Hall will convert to its new phone system on Apr. 2. An auto attendant will answer and each department will have extensions. The main phone number

for the Town Hall will be 229-7000.

The Board agreed to grant permission for the installation of a new lottery game, Keno To Go, in the three locations that now sell lottery in Sheffield: Greta's Market, Silk's Variety and PJ's.

The Board agreed to form a committee to explore the Community Preservation Act, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board and the Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee. Anyone interested in serving on the committee should send a letter of interest to the Board.

3/26—Michael Maher, Head of Berkshire School, and William Clough, Assistant Head, were present for a discussion about ways Berkshire School could become more involved in the community. Suggestions included creating a group that includes members of local community organiza-

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Visit the Town of Sheffield's web site
at www.sheffieldma.gov

tions and the Berkshire School community to talk about how to do it. It was also noted that Berkshire School would be willing to discuss improving collaboration with Mt. Everett Regional High School to allow students to participate in Berkshire programs and/or courses. *[See page 11.]*

Discussion ensued about Berkshire School's centennial celebration this year and the fact that the school would like to provide better financial support to the town. Maher presented a check in the amount of \$75,000 to the Board as a one-time gift in recognition of their anniversary. Board members expressed

their appreciation for the gift. Administrator Kellogg suggested that the funds be deposited in a special account to be used for one-time expenses rather than for operating expenses. Maher said he was also hoping to increase Berkshire's regular annual contribution to the Town in lieu of property taxes.

The Board has received requests from the Planning Board for a number of changes to the zoning by-laws to be voted on at Town Meeting. Administrator Kellogg provided copies of a draft warrant based on articles received to date and asked Board members to review and advise him of any changes.

4/1—Administrator Kellogg explained the need for a Proposition 2½ override, to be voted on in the May 12 town election. The last budget presented from the School Committee would put Sheffield \$75,000 over its levy limit. He recommended setting the override at \$100,000 to also take into account a likely slowdown in new growth. The additional \$100,000 would add 18 cents to the mill rate.

The Board agreed to place an override question before the voters. Discussion continued regarding the town and school budget increases.

Ed McCormick, Will Brinker and Chief McGarry were present to discuss the Continuation of Operation Plan (COOP). This is a management tool to list replacements for essential positions to allow the continuation of local government in the event of an emergency. There is a \$750 grant available to pay for the plan development. The plan would be reviewed annually in July. Administrator Kellogg will set up a working meeting with the Board and McCormick, Brinker and Chief McGarry.



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NEWS FROM TOWN HALL

New town telephone system

Town Administrator Joe Kellogg reported that the long-awaited new town telephone system has been successfully installed. Apart from a few glitches that are being corrected, it's working well. All existing departmental telephone numbers will remain the same. Callers who don't know the specific extension can call the main number, 229-7000. They will be greeted by the recorded voice of the town's "auto attendant" (a machine that uses the voice of Assistant Town Administrator Rhonda La Bombard), which provides a list of three-digit extensions of the town officials and departments.

Email messages from town hall

Kellogg also announced that Town Hall expects to start making use of a feature of the town's website sometime over the summer. This feature permits the town to email notices of meetings and other events and other messages to those who have registered to receive them. The system can be used, say, to send out agendas for meetings of town boards or commissions and alerts about the meeting cancellations or changes in location. To register to receive these messages, go to the town website (sheffieldma.gov) and click on "Subscribe to News and Notices."

New town appointments policy in effect

The new appointments policy, which was adopted by the Board

of Selectmen last August, governs appointments made by the Selectmen to town committees, commissions and other town boards (other than elected boards). For appointments that are made after the annual town elections, it requires that all vacancies be announced in the press and on the town bulletin boards and web site (click on "Board Vacancies" on the home page).

Those interested in serving on a board, including incumbents interested in another term, should file written applications with the Selectmen's office by May 15. A list of applicants will be made public shortly after the deadline.

The Board of Selectmen will make appointments in June. Terms will generally begin on the first day of the next fiscal year (July 1) and end on the last day (June 30) of a fiscal year.

—Peter Rowntree

RECYCLING

Sheffield residents can recycle old oil paint, stains, paint thinners, turpentine and waste motor oil:

- Sat., May 17, 9 to 11:00am, at the Lenox Department of Public Works, 275 Main St.

- Sat., June 14, 9 to 11:30am at the Great Barrington Recycling Center, Rt. 7 (across from Monument Mountain High School).

Latex paint is not accepted at these events. To pre-register, call 413-445-4556 ext. 17.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

The Economic Development Task Force has met weekly on Wednesdays since February to tackle its short-term, high-energy assignment of evaluating what Sheffield can do to become more "business friendly" while staying true to the town's Master Plan.

The group is working with consultant Rich Vinette, who is also executive director of the Lee Community Development Corporation. Vinette was provided by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to help the task force develop an economic development strategy for the town.

So far, the group has met with Brian Killeen, director of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, and Kevin Schmitz, co-owner of The Marketplace, which has taken over Barrington Stage's old space on Elm Court, off Route 7. It plans to meet with David Rooney, the new director of the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation. Selectmen David Macy and Jim Collingwood and David Smith, Sr., from the Agricultural Commission have also provided input.

In addition to focusing on traditional businesses and agriculture, the task force will identify strategies to encourage new businesses, including ecotourism, nonprofit organizations, home-based businesses and the "creative economy." The task force plans to identify business opportunities

not dealt with in the zoning by-laws and review the town districts and the business uses allowed or permitted in each. From that work, the group may recommend zoning changes.

A survey was recently mailed to nearly 300 Sheffield

businesses. It might be followed up with personal interviews of a cross-section of the respondents. The aim is to develop an updated snapshot of Sheffield's economic climate. If your business didn't receive the survey and you would like to participate, please contact Town Administrator Joe Kellogg.

Later in the spring, a forum will be held to discuss its findings and recommendations and to get community feedback. The Task Force expects to present the Board of Selectmen with an Economic Development Strategy and implementation recommendations by the beginning of June.

Members of the Task Force include Rene Wood, Catherine Miller, Jason Ostrander (Economic Development Specialist for Congressman John Olver's office and a Sheffield resident), Dennis Duff and Bill Kistler from Sheffield Plastics, Julie Hannum, and Town Administrator Joe Kellogg.

If you have questions or suggestions or you'd like to attend a Task Force meeting, call the Town Administrator at 229-7000 for more information.

—Julie Hannum

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Sheffield Conservation Commission is seeking two members. Members must be residents of the Town of Sheffield with a commitment to protecting wetland resources. The Commission meets two Thursday evenings each month and visits sites prior to voting on applications.

Interested individuals are encouraged to call the commission at Town Hall at 413-854-8613 or email Jeff Waingrow, the Conservation Commission's chairman, at jlw189@msn.com. In addition to Waingrow, current members of the commission are Robert Parker and Sherry Macdonald.

MONTEREY MASONRY: A LIFE ROMANCING THE STONE

Master mason Mark Mendel has been working with stone since 1969. He started by working as a stone-mason's apprentice in Maine to support himself while pursuing his other career as a visual artist—he is a writer, lecturer, teacher, sculptor and poet. A resident of Sheffield, he is also the founder and owner of Monterey Masonry LLC.

The company's three-acre stone yard and office are located on Silver St. just to the west of Route 7. Mark moved the company to Sheffield from Monterey in 1994 to better serve his customers in Berkshire County, northwest Connecticut, and upstate New York. An avid cyclist, he admits that he had another motive: Sheffield, being flatter than Monterey, is much easier peddling.

Currently, he employs 13 people full time and one part time. They include five masons, an office manager and seven apprentices.

Mark points out that marble quarrying, lime-making and brick and stone masonry have been important industries in Sheffield since colonial times. He is proud to be among those continuing this tradition. Marble from the town was used in a number of historically significant structures, such as the Washington Monument and the Tweed Court House in Manhattan, and in many of the great residences in the region. Mark knows of at least eight old quarries scattered through the woods in town.

While Mark does all sorts of masonry work, over the years he has built up a national reputation for his highly specialized "niche" business: historic masonry restoration.

His company is one of a fairly small number of masonry operations in the U.S. that work on historic—mainly 18th and 19th century—renovations and



Mark Mendel and some of his handiwork

restorations. These painstaking and time-consuming projects can be done properly only by experienced and skilled craftsmen who have a passion for old buildings and extensive knowledge of how they were put together as well as of the techniques, tools and materials used by the original builders.

Another critical factor in restoration work is the ability to find and acquire the right antique building materials to do the job. This is not easy. Very little can be purchased "off the shelf" from ordinary commercial yards. Many years ago, old brick and hand-cut and finished stonework from the demolition of old buildings were routinely bulldozed and buried ("a great

loss," says Mark), making scrounging and reclaiming a real challenge. Now, the value of restoration materials has been recognized and they are being reclaimed and recycled. Mark maintains a network of pickers and salvagers who find and supply him with items like old hearthstones, fireplaces, steps, columns and lintels.

Mark's list of completed restorations is long and is getting longer. They

include work at the Hancock Shaker Village, a stone barn in Vermont and many national historic register houses and structures all over New England. Three years ago, his masons built a fireplace and chimney for the recreation of Thoreau's Walden Pond house at Berkshire School.

His favorite restoration experience occurred in 2000 when he went down to Virginia for a week to work with his old friend master mason Jimmy Price, who was restoring Thomas Jefferson's "other" house (meaning other than Monticello), Poplar Forest, outside of Lynchburg. "Jefferson is our greatest architect," says Mendel, "and to lay a few bricks for him

SHEFFIELD'S MARBLE DESTINY?

While Mark is delighted to be living and working in Sheffield, he is critical of what he sees as the town's excessive regulation of historic industries and businesses. He believes that more should be done to accommodate small-scale lumberyards, farming, building supply and gravel and other quarrying operations in terms of zoning regulations and permitting. He recognizes that there is a need to protect homeowners from noise, visual blight, noxious smells and other environmental degradation but thinks that special consideration should be given to activities that have been around for decades—or centuries—and have played an important role in defining the character of the town.

Mark says, "In the case of our marble resource, I think this town should be sensitive enough to make a distinction between a huge mining operation, which no one wants, and what I would call artisan quarrying, a limited and low-impact operation that could harvest some of this historic and beautiful material. What if they needed marble to restore the Washington Monument? Are we going to tell them to go to China?"

Wildflowers at Lime Kiln Farm. Join botanist and author Joe Strauch in search of late-spring wildflowers in the fields, wetlands and woodland habitats of Mass-Audubon's newest sanctuary in the Berkshires. Walking is mostly easy, on rolling terrain. Wear a hat, long pants and sleeves and bring sunscreen, insect repellent, water and a snack. Meet at the sanctuary on Silver St., Sat., May 24, 10am-12 noon. \$4 member, \$6 nonmember.

was a huge honor. That's at the top of my resume."

With his reputation for historic work, Mark feels that there may be a misapprehension that he only works on old houses. As examples of his modern work he points to his design for the fireplace at the Route 7 Grill and his stonework on Route 7 in front of Guido's Marketplace. He calls the Guido's work "Rock & Rail," and describes it as a contemporary design using two of the oldest elements of the New England landscape, the stone wall and the split rail fence. "It's what happens to these elements when the landscape around them mutates, from pastoral farm and garden, into a busy shopping area. If they don't evolve they look corny."

Mark is seeing more and more contemporary design in Berkshire residences. "For one thing, almost all those big old center-chimney colonials have pretty much been restored and even unrestored, and they now cost a fortune. People in their 20s and 30s see the modern era as historical." In 2006 the Monterey Masonry team completed extensive stonework on a contemporary house designed by the Seattle architect Jim Cutler, a house that was featured on the front page of the New York Times.

Another of Monterey Masonry's specialties is hardscape—meaning anything that doesn't grow—for landscaping, including building stone or brick walls, terraces, paths, rock gardens and waterfalls. The company, working in concert with landscape designer Anne Brook, can provide complete design services.

In addition to doing its own masonry projects, the company's business includes advising others on difficult jobs as well as "sourcing"—finding the right materials for a specific job.

Mark says that he has not suffered yet from the current slowdown in the building industry. He attributes this to his niche restoration business, which is less susceptible to the decline than other masonry work. He also credits the relatively large number of skilled masons on his

staff, which allows him to take on larger projects, and the quality of their work and the variety of projects they can handle. In a sheetrocked world, his is one of the few companies still doing old-fashioned three-coat lime plaster.

He also credits the 25-plus years he has been in the Berkshires as establishing a solid client base and good relationships with architects, designers and builders. As Mark says, to stay busy, you have to "throw the net wide."

Typically, he might have several jobs under way simultaneously, for example, in Kent, CT, Hudson, NY, and Lenox. Last summer the crew worked restoring a stone barn on Isle La Motte in Northern Vermont, five miles from Canada. The summer before they did a job on Nantucket. In 1996 the crew spent 10 weeks on Vashon Island in Puget Sound. Currently, Mark is looking at a job on Naushon Island off Wood's Hole. "I guess we love islands," he says.

A man who clearly loves both masonry and the materials he works with, Mark is so enthusiastic that he wants to impart his skills, interest and excitement to others. Over the years he has trained a large number of masons and written several articles on restoration masonry for industry magazines. He gives lectures and teaches classes on masonry for organizations like Berkshire School and the Berkshire Botanical Garden, where he teaches semi-annual classes in stonework in April and October. (Call or email the garden for further information.) In March Mark gave a class at the Phillip Johnson Glass House in New Canaan, CT, and is currently giving a series of lectures on "What Stone Taught Me," at the Cambridge (MA) Center for Adult Education.

Mark considers himself a teacher, practicing in the ancient master-apprentice tradition. He says, "I enjoy seeing a young man who doesn't know a trowel from a towel starting off in the trade, gaining experience over the years, and becoming a great stonemason. I'm never surprised, but they are." —Peter Rowntree

MARKETPLACE HOPES TO OPEN CAFÉ BY JUNE

The Marketplace of the Berkshires, the prepared food and catering company that used to be headquartered in Great Barrington, has now moved into a state-of-the-art kitchen in Sheffield on Elm Court, in the building where Barrington Stage used to be located.

"We're working on our café and hope to get it up and running by June," said Dan Jimmerson, spokesperson for the company. The café will focus on what Dan calls "wholesome food, like good hearty sandwiches and hand-tossed salads." The company is currently fine-tuning the menu.

For the past 12 years, the Marketplace has catered parties and events in the Berkshires and beyond. It also runs the prepared-food section in Guido's in Great Barrington. The company employs about 35 people, not counting catering personnel, who are hired as needed. Down the road, the company hopes to offer cooking classes at its Sheffield location.

"Sheffield is doing a great job of welcoming us," said Dan. "We want to be a part of the community."

For more information, see www.marketplacekitchen.com.



TWIN RIVERS FARM NOW SELLS RAW MILK

Since Christmas, Bob and Martha Kilmer of Twin Rivers Farm in Ashley Falls have been selling raw milk from a refrigerated case in the milk shed by their dairy barn. Half gallons are \$3 and gallons \$5.

The milk shed is open from 6am to around 8pm seven days a week. "People can call ahead if they need to come later than that," says Martha, "and we'll open the milk shed for them."

Twin Rivers Farm is located on Rannapo Rd. just west of the Ashley Falls Post Office. The phone number is 229-7932.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS AND EVENTS

Happy Birthday, Sheffield. The Society's big event in June is the festival in honor of Sheffield's 275th anniversary. See the story on page 12.

Wheeler House tour. The Great Barrington Historical Society will offer members of the Sheffield Society a private tour of their restoration-in-process, the 1771 Wheeler House, on Sat., May 10, 2pm. The Wheeler House is located on Rt. 7 in Great Barrington across from the Big Y/Staples Plaza.

An Unfolding History of the Berkshires. David J. McLaughlin will present a book talk and signing on Fri., May 16, 6:30pm, in conjunction with The Bookloft and the Bushnell-Sage Library, at the Library. See page 14 for more.

Stone Store exhibit: "Red, White and Blue." The Society showcases selections from the folk art collection of Stephen Leigh May 10 to June 22. All the objects have one thing in common: they are red, white, and blue. The exhibit is curated by Jim Miller, Society archivist and resident historian. There will be an opening reception on Sat., May 17, 1-4pm.

Annual meeting and talk. At the annual meeting, Paul Banevicius, chair of the Berkshire School Art Department, will give a slide presentation and talk on the comic strip, drawing on his collection of over 550 original cartoonist sketches. Fri., June 13, 7:30pm, in Dewey Memorial Hall.

Stone Store exhibit:
Five Friends Art Show. Joe Baker, Hans Heuberger, Dave McCandless, Lois Ryder and Lois Van Clef,—the five friends—are joined this year by Ellen Murtaugh for a third year at the Old Stone Store. The exhibit, featuring recent work, takes place at the same time as the Housatonic Valley Art League's Annual Juried Art Competition in Dewey Memorial Hall, where more of the friends' work will be featured. June 27-July 13, with an opening reception on Sat., June 28, 1-3 pm.



One of the folk art objects in the Stone Store's "Red, White and Blue" exhibit.

For further information on Society programs, contact the Sheffield Historical Society, 159-161 Main Street, P.O. Box 747, Sheffield, MA 01257, 229-2694 or by email at shs@sheffieldhistory.org.



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SHEFFIELD LAND TRUST UPCOMING EVENTS

✿ **May 14** ✿

Invasive Species Inventory and Removal Workshop
with the New England Wild Flower Society

Call for details 229-0234

✿ **June 21** ✿

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Meeting

11:30 to 1:30pm

Look for details in the Shoppers Guide
closer to the date

KIWANIS NEWS AND EVENTS

Tote bag project. Sheffield Kiwanian Dorothy Kelley leads a small committee that makes tote bags for parents of injured children at the Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Institute of Tufts Medical Center in Boston. The committee recently received a note from a parent: "Going through an ordeal like we did, the bag was like a gift from heaven.... Know that your time and effort truly make a difference in people's lives." Dorothy will be gathering another crew together again in May to make more tote bags. Anyone interested in helping can contact the Sheffield Kiwanis Club.

Recent events. Once again, the Sheffield Kiwanians partnered with the Great Barrington Fire Department to host a casino night on Mar. 8 at Crissy Farms in Great Barrington. The event raised \$1,800.

On Mar. 15 the annual Step 'n Sip Scholarship Dance took place at the South Berkshire Community Center. Doug Feony and his band entertained with big band-style music. Turnout was low, however, so future dances are being reconsidered.

At the Mar. 4 meeting, Paul O'Brien, member of the newly formed town Broadband Committee, updated us on the committee's work. At the April 8 meeting, Bill Connell told us about the donation of land at the Covered Bridge. The Kiwanis are considering helping to develop the planned town park in that area.

Little League. Little League try-outs were held Mar. 26 and 29 at the Mount Everett gymnasium. Double-header games will again take place on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Sheffield Town Park. The Little League All-Star game is set for Sun., June 22.

Aid to scouts. The Sheffield Boy Scouts received \$50 from the Sheffield Kiwanis for a placemat ad used at the Sheffield Fire Dept. Spaghetti Dinner on April 5. The placemats will be used again at the roast beef dinner in September.

Golf ahead. The annual golf tournament is scheduled for Fri., June 20, at the Egremont Country Club. —Gretta Willig

AMERICAN LEGION WINNER

Arielle Van Deusen won third place in the state level of the 2008 American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Arielle will be attending the University of New Haven in the fall. The American Legion awards scholarships to the finalists of these competitions. For more information on the scholarship program, contact Dale Van Deusen, Sheffield representative of American Legion Post 340 at 229-8163.

Dawn O'Neil's Family Child Care



1701 Hewins Street
Ashley Falls, MA 01222
(413) 229-8557

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Perry Preserve walk. Enjoy a walk at the The Nature Conservancy's Perry Preserve in Wassauc, NY, May 17, 10:30am-noon.

Talk on seeing the landscape. Learn about invasive species, new remote sensing technology and habitat restoration for turtles, at a talk at the Sheffield Library, June 27, 4-6pm.

Jessica Toro, Conservation Program Manager, will unveil new technology that TNC has tested in the Berkshire Taconic Landscape to locate invasive species in forested areas. Jess will show how new high-resolution aerial images of the landscape can help identify plants by their color telemetry.

The new technology is part of the ongoing Weed-It-Now work pioneered in this region. During the past five years, TNC has treated over 9,000-acres. Jess recently secured agreements to treat invasive species on two new parcels: 404-acres in Sheffield owned by Berkshire School and Taconic State Park property in New York.

Round Mountain hike. Jess Toro will lead a hike up Round Mountain on Massachusetts/Connecticut border, July 19, 8:30-11:30am. —Allison Lasso

To learn more about any of these events or the work of the Conservancy, visit www.nature.org/Berkshire and click on the newsletter link, or contact Allison Lasso at alasso@tnc.org, or 229-0232 x229.



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LAND TRUST TO PROTECT TWO FARMS

The Sheffield Land Trust is working to complete Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) on two farms by June 30:

Howden Farm. Working with Bruce Howden and David Prouty, the Land Trust will help the state purchase an APR on the farm on Rannapo Rd.

Bow Wow Rd.: Working with the Pevzner, Drucker and Sossner families, the Land Trust will complete the purchase of the land (40 acres were already purchased from David Preston and Steve Macchi) and sell the APR to the state. The protected farmland and the house on the Pevzner property will be sold to farmers

Ted Dobson of Equinox Farm and Anna Mack of Wild and Cultivated.

To make this happen, the Land Trust must raise a portion of the funds locally, which leverages a much larger investment from the state. In round numbers, the combined cost of the projects is roughly \$3 million, with the state providing \$2 million, the land owners and farmer partners providing \$450,000, and Land Trust raising \$550,000 from the community. Donations and pledges totaling \$240,000 are already in, with \$310,000 left to raise by June 30.

To help the Land Trust raise money

for the Howden APR, Bruce has linked a reduction in his sale price—a contribution to the project—to the amount of new donations and pledges from the community.

Anniversary challenge grant. In honor of the Land Trust's 20th anniversary, an anonymous donor has made a challenge that will match increases in giving to the Land Trust over 2007 by contributors who give \$1,000 or more in 2008. This all-or-nothing challenge applies to any contribution. For more information or to contribute, contact the Land Trust at 229-0234, shefland@bcn.net or P.O. Box 940, Sheffield, MA 01257.

ARBOR DAY PLANTING

The Sheffield Tree Project led a ceremonial tree planting at the new Covered Bridge Park in honor of Arbor Day. Members of the public joined in to plant an American sycamore, chosen because it's a native species often found on riverbanks. Not only will it shade future picnic goers, it will help stabilize the banks of the Housatonic River.



NEIGHBORGOODS CLOSES

Neighborgoods Local Creations, a store featuring the work of local artists and craftspeople, will be closing as of May 31. Consignees should pick up their work and display items by the end of May. "The store has been struggling for the last year," said Caitlin Hotelling, proprietor. "It's time to move on. Thanks to everyone for their support over the past three years."

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FIRE LOG—Rick Boardman, Chief

February		10	Alarm at Mt. Everett High School. Alarm time 1:53am. In service 2:15 am.	7	Brush fire at 1055 Route 7A. Alarm time 12:30pm. In service 1:15pm.
18	Fire in the machine room at Sheffield Plastics. Alarm time 8:38am. In service 9:39am.	20	Water in basement at 254 S. Main St. Alarm time 2:08pm. In service 3:32pm	7	Lifting assistance at 16 Lilac Lane. Alarm time 1:35pm. In service 1:56pm.
March		April		8	Brush fire at 118 Galvin Farm Trail. Alarm time 12:38pm. In service 2:20pm.
3	Alarm at Mt. Everett High School. Alarm time 10:15am. In service 10:20am.	2	Brush pile burning after hours at 178 Boardman St. Alarm time 7:40pm. In service 8:18pm.	9	Mutual aid to Great Barrington Fire Dept. for brush fire. Alarm time 12:32pm. In service 2:01pm.
6	Water in basement at 371 Miller Ave. Alarm time 7:54am. In service 8:26am.	3	Brush fire at 742 Barnum St. Alarm time 11:58 am. In service 12:42pm.	9	CO detector activation at 33 Kellogg Rd. Alarm time 2:00pm. In service 2:40pm.
8	Water in basement at 354 South Main St. Alarm time 7:37pm. In service 9:34pm.	3	Brush fire at 45 Woodedge Lane. Alarm time 3:09pm. In service 3:29pm.	15	Brush fire at 627 Hewins St. Alarm time 11:07 am. In service 11:30 am.
8	Power lines down on Route 7. Alarm time 8:30pm. In service 10:02pm.	6	Search for missing children. Alarm time 10:33am. In service 11:11am.	19	Mutual aid to Great Barrington Fire Dept. for brush fire. Alarm time 1:48pm. In service 4:00pm.
8	Power lines down at 24 Cactus Lane. Alarm time 10:02pm. In service 10:45pm.	6	Truck accident on Route 7. Alarm time 2:39pm. In service 3:45pm.		

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

February			110 Root Lane, \$306,000.
1	Patrice Dean to William C. & Rosanne F. Hower, property at 828 Salisbury Rd., \$280,000.	29	Louis A. & Lisa C. Caputal to Steven & Melissa Kain, property at 1074 Water Farm Rd., \$500,000.
7	Jeane K. & Sydney L. Weinstein to the Inhabitants of Sheffield, property at Covered Bridge Rd., gift.	March	
12	Jane K. Wright to Matthew & Deborah Curran, property at	31	Elinor M. Podesta, estate of, to Jessica T. Treat, 95 Maple Ave., \$317,500.

WILDFLOWER HOTLINE AT BARTHOLOMEW'S COBBLE

Bartholomew's Cobble is now providing a weekly update on which wildflowers are blooming at 413-298-3239 ext. 3003. For instance, the week of April 23, red trillium, white trillium, bloodroot, trout lily and blue cohosh were flowering.

To help you spot the wildflowers when you visit the Cobble, a new signboard, "What's in Bloom," is posted on the side deck of the Visitor's Center. The photographs on the board are updated weekly by local volunteer photographer Pamel Wyeth.

BARTHOLOMEW'S COBBLE EVENTS

Bird Walk: Spring Migration

Explore various avian habitats for arriving spring migrants. Birders of all levels welcome. Bring binoculars. Sat., May 10, 8-10am. Please pre-register. Members: free. Nonmembers: adult \$5; child \$3.

Mother's Day Wildflower Walk and Tea

Enjoy our wildflowers with a guided stroll, then sample teas infused with flower blossoms. Sun., May 11, 2-4pm. Please pre-register. Members: adult/child \$5; family \$10. Nonmembers: adult/child \$6; family \$15.

Garlic Mustard Jamboree

Help battle one of the Cobble's biggest threats to biodiversity. Wed., May 14, 9am-noon. Call for details. Free to all.

Wild Edibles Extravaganza

Join Rene Wendell to gather and prepare tasty ingredients fresh from the wild. Sat., May 24, 10am-noon. Please pre-register. Members: adult \$6; child \$3. Nonmembers: adult \$8; child \$4.

Housatonic River Paddle: Guided Canoe Trip

Paddle past the ledges and floodplains of the Cobble with a naturalist guide, watching for bald eagles, turtles and abundant wildlife. We provide boats, paddles and life preservers. Memorial Day, May 26, 9am-noon, Sundays, June 1, 8 and 15, 8:30-11:30am. Sat, June 21, 8:30-11:30am. Please pre-register. Members: adult \$24; child (6-12) \$12. Nonmembers: adult \$30; child (6-12) \$15.

Bartholomew's Cobble Eco-Volunteers

Pull, lop, chop invasive weeds to protect the Cobble ecology. Thursdays through October 9, 11:30am. Free. Call for information.

Rocks, Roads, Revolution Quest

Follow a self-guided one-mile, 60-minute treasure hunt, uncovering the stories held in the landscape surrounding Bartholomew's Cobble and the Ashley House. Saturdays, June-October, 1-2pm. Members: free. Nonmembers: free with admission.

Sheffield Covered Bridge Canoe Trip

Join naturalists from the Housatonic River Museum and The Trustees of Reservations to paddle nine miles of the Housatonic River, from the covered bridge to the Cobble. Bring a picnic lunch. We provide boats, paddles and life preservers. Sun., June 29, 9am-2pm. Please pre-register. Members: adult \$28; child (10-12) \$12. Nonmembers: adult \$35; child (10-16) \$20.

Summer preview

Saturday mornings: Best of the Cobble
Sunday mornings: Housatonic River Paddle
Sat., July 12 and Aug. 9: Reptile Roundup and Fun for Families
Fri., July 18 and Aug. 15: Moonlight Paddle
Fri., July 25: Sunset Photography Hike with Sara Sheehy
Sat., Aug. 2: Live Birds of Prey with Tom Ricardi
Thur., Aug. 21: Mum Bett Day Celebration

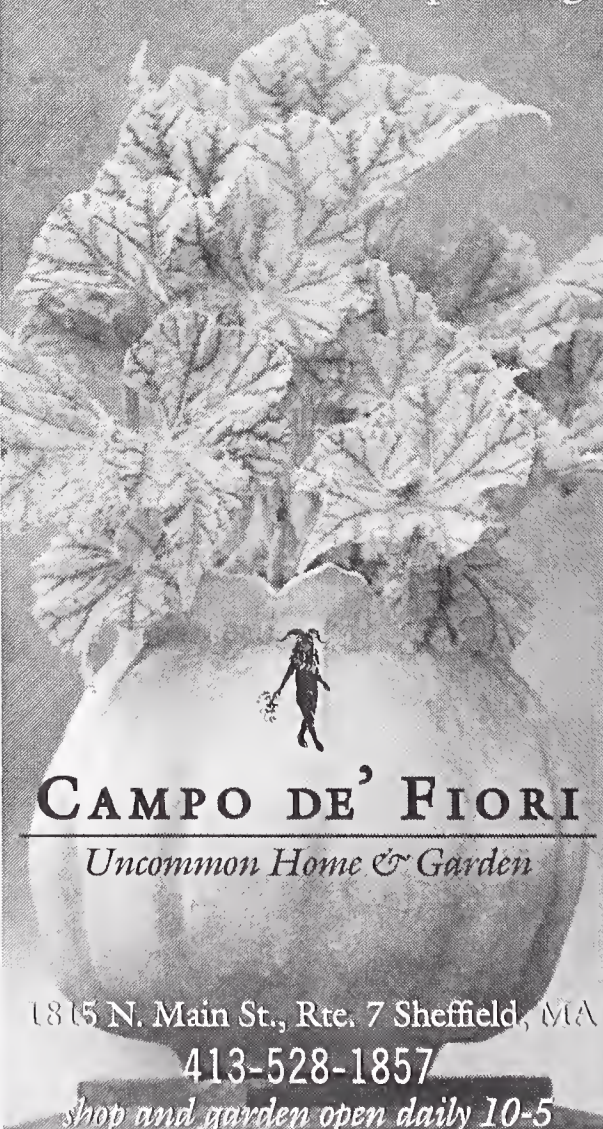
Bartholomew's Cobble, a 329-acre property of The Trustees of Reservations with five miles of trails, is located on Weatogue Rd. in Ashley Falls. It's open year-round, daily, sunrise to

sunset. The Visitor's Center is open 9am-4:30pm (closed Sundays and Mondays, Dec. to March). For more information, call 229-8600 or check the website at www.thetrustees.org.

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED IN SHEFFIELD, March and April 2008

Date	Owner	Location	Description	Fee	Est. value
3/4	Allen & Karin Altman	80 West Rd.	Replace roof finishes	\$25	\$1,500
3/6	Jerry Moren	221 Alum Hill Rd.	Repair storm damage	\$80	\$12,000
3/13	Richard Lasky	779 West Sheffield Rd.	Roof repair	\$25	\$3,500
3/13	Eric Carlsen	226 Miller Ave.	Alterations	\$120	\$35,000
3/20	Dave Godwin	54 Bull Hill Rd.	Alterations	\$50	\$5,000
4/01	Deann Simmons	848 Silver St.	Replace roof finishes	\$25	\$12,000
4/3	J. Chase	Berkshire School Rd.	Replace roof finishes	\$25	\$4,000
4/7	Arlene Petroff Grossman	814 Bow Wow Rd.	Replace roof finishes	\$25	\$4,000
4/8	Berkshire School	245 Undermountain Rd.	Temporary tents	\$25	—
4/8	Simon Baigleman	522 Rote Hill Rd.	In-ground pool	\$75	\$75,000
4/15	Rob Meyer	159 Clayton Rd.	Install metalbestos chimney	\$25	\$1,000
4/15	Rob Meyer	159 Clayton Rd.	New exterior deck	\$96	\$3,500
4/15	Campo de'Fiori	1815 N. Main St.	Temporary tents	\$50	—
4/22	Donna Le Fever	11 Maple Ave.	Sign permit	\$25	—
4/22	Kaiser & La Grant	22 Kellogg Rd.	6 ft. fence and replacement windows	\$75	\$4,000
4/22	Robert Law	296 Berkshire School Rd.	Slate roof repair	\$25	\$2,500
4/22	Beth Bartholomew	1080 S. Undermountain Rd.	16 x 18 ft. sun room	\$75	\$18,000
4/28	Ken Schopp	26 Rannapo Rd.	Screen room and den additions	\$125	\$15,000
4/28	TAP Enterprises, Inc.	619 N. Main St.	Temporary signs	\$25	—
4/29	Michael W Martin	94 Root Lane	Above-ground swimming pool	\$25	\$17,000

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Calendar Page

May

- 9 Farmers' Market opens (p. 3)
- 11 MOTHER'S DAY
- 12 Town elections, Town Hall, 9am-7pm
- 10 Wheeler House tour (p. 22)
- 10 Book talk, Library (p. 14)
- 15 Deadline for town applications (p. 19)
- 16 Book talk, Library (p. 14)
- 16 "Sound of Music" at Mt. Everett, 7pm (p. 9)
- 17 Recycling, Lenox, 9am (p. 19)
- 17 "Sound of Music," 7pm (p. 9)
- 18 "Sound of Music," 2pm (p. 9)
- 24 Wildflower Walk, Lime Kiln Sanctuary (p. 21)
- 26 MEMORIAL DAY
- 26 Parade, Ashley Falls, 8am (p. 12)
- 26 Parade, Sheffield, 11am (p. 12)
- 31 Music workshop & concert, Monterey UCC (p. 9)

June

- 11 Agricultural fair, Mt. Everett, 10am (p. 10)
- 15 FATHER'S DAY
- 13 Historical Society annual meeting, 7:30pm (p. 22)
- 14 Recycling, Great Barrington, 9am (p. 19)
- 15 **Sheffield Times deadline for events and ads**
- 21 Sheffield birthday, Historical Society, 1pm (p. 12)
- 21 Land Trust annual meeting, 11:30am
- 28 Children's book sale, Library, 11am (p. 13)
- 30 Theater camp begins (p. 9)

See also the listings for The Nature Conservancy and Sheffield Kiwanis (p. 23) and Bartholomew's Cobble (p. 25)

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ONGOING CALENDAR ITEMS

Meetings or events that occur on a less than weekly basis are noted by number – i.e. "1st", "3rd" indicates meetings the first and third times that day occurs in the month. * indicates appointment needed.

Mondays:

Food Assistance Program, Old Parish Church, 9-10:30am

Board of Selectmen, Town Hall, 7pm, 1st, 3rd

Board of Health, Town Hall, 7pm, 2nd

Meals on Wheels, Mon-Fri, except holidays

Foot care clinic, Dewey Hall/Senior Ctr., 1st

Tuesdays:

Senior Center physical fitness, 9am

Children's Story Hour, Library, 10am

Building Inspector, Town Hall, Tues. 7am-1pm

Senior Center "Lawn Chair Movie," 11:30am

Ashley Falls Historic District Commission, Town Hall, 6:30pm, 2nd

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Support Group, Fairview

Hospital Library, 6:30pm, 4th

Industrial Development Commission, Town Hall, 7:30pm, last

Kiwanis Club, Limey's Restaurant, 6:30pm

Wednesdays:

Senior Center Knitting Group, 1pm

Thursdays:

Senior Center physical fitness, 9am

Parent-Child Playgroup, Greenwoods Community Church, 9:30-11:30am

Planning Board, Town Hall, 7pm, 2nd, 4th

Building Inspector, Town Hall, Thurs. 3pm-7pm

* Blood Pressure Clinic, Dewey Hall/Senior Center, 9am-12pm, 2nd

* Hearing Testing available, Senior Center, 3rd

Conservation Commission, Town Hall, 7pm, 2nd, 4th

Saturdays:

Contra Dancing, Sheffield Grange, Rte 7, 8:30pm, 4th

Sundays:

Men's Group, Old Parish, 7:45am, 2nd

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